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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 CCO-00 USIE-00 SS-20 NSC-10
AID-28 CIAE-00 INR-07 SY-03 O-03 PRS-01 NSAE-00
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INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY RIO DE JANEIRO
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
USCINCSO/CANAL ZONE

DECLASSIFICATION DATE 5/16/77
PER F Devine OFFICE ARA
FADRC FOI CASE NO. 630373 Ronfeldt

S E C R E T MONTEVIDEO 1534

CINCSO FOR POLAD

SUBJECT: MITRIONE KIDNAPPING - CONVERSATION WITH THE PRESIDENT

REF: MONTEVIDEO 1528

1. I MET WITH PRESIDENT JORGE PACHECO FOR FORTY MINUTES THIS MORNING (AUG 3) AT HIS HOME TO DISCUSS LATEST DEVELOPMENTS IN KIDNAPPING SITUATION.

2. I BEGAN BY TELLING PRESIDENT THAT I WISHED TO EXPRESS TO HIM PERSONALLY, AS I HAVE ALREADY TO FOREIGN MINISTER, THE DEEP CONCERN OF USG OVER KIDNAPPING OF MITRIONE. OUR ANXIETY IS HEIGHTENED BY INDICATION THAT MITRIONE HAS BEEN WOUNDED AND THAT HIS STATE OF HEALTH MAY BE QUESTIONABLE. I NOTED THIS CAUSED PARTICULAR ANGUISH TO MITRIONE'S FAMILY AND WE NATURALLY ANXIOUS TO SEE HIS RELEASE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. I THEN EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR ATTITUDE OF GOU AND OUR CONFIDENCE THAT IT WAS DOING AND WOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO EFFECT RETURN OF MITRIONE AT EARLIEST DATE. I SAID WE FULLY RECOGNIZED OUR OWN CONCERN WAS SHARED BY GOU, IN THAT KIDNAPPING OF FOREIGN DIPLOMAT WAS OBVIOUSLY SOURCE OF EMBARRASSMENT TO URUGUAY. I ASSURED HIM THAT ALL PERSONNEL OF EMBASSY NOW

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TAKING MAXIMUM PRECAUTIONS TO AVOID ANY REPETITION OF EVENTS OF LAST FRIDAY AND STRESSED WE HAD RECEIVED FULL COOPERATION FROM POLICE AUTHORITIES. I THEN SAID THAT WITH RECEIPT YESTERDAY OF SECOND NOTE FROM MLN-KIDNAPPERS, GOU NOW WAS FACED WITH SPECIFIC RANSOM DEMAND. I ASKED PRESIDENT WHETHER HE COULD GIVE ME ANY IDEA OR INDICATION OF WHEN AND HOW THE GOVERNMENT PLANNED TO RESPOND TO MLN'S DEMAND.

3. PRESUMABLY REFERRING TO PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY SOME PROMINENT URUGUAYANS REGARDING WHETHER OR NOT GOVERNMENT COULD OR SHOULD NEGOTIATE WITH MLN, THE PRESIDENT BEGAN BY EMPHASIZING THAT HE COULD NOT SPEAK FOR OTHER PERSONS. HE COULD ONLY GIVE HIS PERSONAL REACTION BUT SINCE HE WAS PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC AND THAT "I, JORGE PACHECO ARECO", HAD CREATED PRESENT ADMINISTRATION, HIS PERSONAL VIEWS WERE OFFICIAL REACTION OF GOU. GOU WAS, OF COURSE, UPSET AND GREATLY CONCERNED OVER THESE EVENTS, ESPECIALLY SO BECAUSE OF WHAT HE TERMED THE "CYNICISM" OF KIDNAPPERS. HE NOTED THEIR MESSAGES HAVE NOT BEEN DIRECTED AT ANY INSTITUTION OR OFFICIAL OFFICE OF THE STATE BUT RATHER WERE AIMED AT URUGUAYAN SOCIETY AS A WHOLE. THEIR DEMANDS AMOUNTED IN EFFECT TO BLACKMAIL EFFORT AGAINST ENTIRE URUGUAYAN NATION. EXTENT OF KIDNAPPERS DEMANDS WAS SO VAST AS TO APPEAR TO PRESIDENT TO BE OBVIOUSLY UNREASONABLE, ALMOST AS IF DELIBERATE EFFORT HAD BEEN MADE BY MLN TO SEEK THE IMPOSSIBLE. FOR THIS REASON, PRESIDENT SAID HE FELT THAT KIDNAPPERS' CURRENT REQUEST WAS ONLY THEIR FIRST MOVE, THAT THEY WOULD HAVE TO MAKE OTHER REQUESTS (PRESUMABLY LESS EXTREME). ALTHOUGH, OF COURSE, THE ENTIRE GOU HAS BEEN MOBILIZED TO MEET THIS PROBLEM, THE MONTEVIDEO POLICE NOW HAVE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR IT UNDER THE DIRECTION AND CONTROL OF INTERIOR MINISTRY. BECAUSE KIDNAPPERS HAVE REFUSED TO ADDRESS THEIR DEMANDS DIRECTLY TO THE GOU, THAT MINISTRY WILL SHORTLY ISSUE COMMUNIQUE (SEPTEL) WHICH WILL REPRESENT GOU RESPONSE FOR TIME BEING.

4. REFERRING TO MY EARLIER CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER PEIRANO AND OUR CONTINUING CONCERN WITH MITRIONE'S HEALTH, I ASKED PRESIDENT WHETHER ANY CONSIDERATION HAD BEEN GIVEN TO SIMPLE INDICATION BY GOU OF WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE WITH KIDNAPPERS, IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY POSSIBILITY OF COMMUNICATIONS IMPASSE BETWEEN MLN AND URUGUAYAN AUTHORITIES. SUCH AN INDICATION BY GOU, OF COURSE, WOULD CARRY WITH IT NO INDICATION OF

WILLINGNESS TO ACCEDE TO THEIR DEMANDS. THE PRESIDENT RESPONDED VERY QUICKLY THAT THE GOU PLANNED TO MAKE NO SUCH GOVERNMENT-WIDE RESPONSE. GOU'S POSITION WOULD BE CONTAINED IN TEXT OF INTERIOR MINISTRY'S COMMUNIQUE TODAY. HE REPEATED THAT KIDNAPPERS HAD MADE NO EFFORT TO COMMUNICATE WITH ANY PART OF GOU, IMPLYING THAT UNTIL THEY DID SO INTERIOR WOULD SERVE AS CHANLEL FOR GOU REACTION.

5. PRESIDENT SAID HE UNDERSTOOD COMPLETELY THE DEEP ANGUISH AND CONCERN WHICH WE MUST FEEL IN THIS SITUATION. HE SAID HE WAS CERTAIN THAT WE LIKEWISE UNDERSTOOD HOW UPSET HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT
WERE WITH THESE EVENTS. IT WAS A TERRIBLE BURDEN AND RESPONSIBILITY WHICH HE KNEW WE DID NOT WANT HIM TO HAVE. EVERYTHING POSSIBLE WOULD BE DONE BUT HE COULD NOT DO THE IMPOSSIBLE. HE REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES THAT AS PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, HE WOULD TAKE EVERY AVENUE TO FULFILL THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF HIS OFFICE. IF POINT EVER CAME WHEN HE FELT HE COULD NOT DO SO, HE COULD NOT REMAIN INPRESIDENCY.

6. THE PRESIDENT THEN ASKED SEVERAL SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ABOUT DETAILS OF UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPT AGAINST JONES, HOW HE ESCAPED, AND OUR GUESS AS TO HOW MITRIONE HAD BEEN INJURED. I RECOUNTED TO HIM DETAILS OF JONES' ESCAPE, NOTING THAT HE WAS NOW AT MY RESIDENCE AND WOULD BE LEAVING SOON FOR VACATION IN UNITED STATES. I SAID WE ASSUMED THAT MITRIONE HAD BEEN SHOT SOMETIME AFTER HIS KIDNAP, AS THERE HAD BEEN NO SHOOTING WHEN HE WAS TAKEN FROM HIS CAR.

7. PRESIDENT CLOSED CONVERSATION BY AGAIN PLEDGING HIS GOVERNMENT'S BEST EFFORTS TO SECURE RELEASE OF MITRIONE. I TOLD HIM THAT HE HAD FULLEST CONFIDENCE IN HIM AND EFFORTS OF HIS GOVERNMENT.

8. COMMENT: FROM FOREGOING, IT APPEARS SITUATION MAY NOT BE AS FAR ADVANCED AS SEEMINGLY INDICATED BY PEIRANO LAST NIGHT. PACHECO EVIDENTLY MET WITH SOME OF HIS MINISTERS LATE LAST NIGHT OR EARLY THIS MORNING AND DECIDED THAT DEMANDS OF MLN SO IMPOSSIBLY HIGH THAT THEY PROVIDED NO BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION OR DIRECT REPLY. CONSEQUENTLY, GOU FINDS IT NECESSARY RESPOND INDIRECTLY WITH AN APPEAL TO PUBLIC. DECISION OF PRESIDENT TO MAKE INDIRCT RESPONSE THROUGH MINISTER OF INTERIOR PROBABLY

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REFLECTS STRONG FEELING OF MILITARY AGAINST ANY DIRECT PRESIDENTIAL REACTION WHICH MIGHT HINT OF WEAKNESS OR WILLINGNESS TO CAPITULATE TO DEMANDS SO EXTENSIVE AS THOSE IN MLN'S SECOND NOTE. ADMIRAL FERNANDEZ AND GENERAL BORBA HAVE TOLD MILITARY OFFICERS OF EMBASSY THIS MORNING THAT MILITARY STRONGLY OPPOSED COMPLYING WITH THESE DEMANDS AND EXPRESSED OPINION THAT IFPRESIDENT CAPITULATED MILITARY WOULD NOT STAND FOR IT, INASMUCH AS CAPITULATION WOULD REPRESENT END OF ANY LAW AND ORDER IN COUNTRY.
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